

**In the United States Court of Federal Claims**  
**OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS**  
**No. 21-187V**

MICHELLE BURKEMPER,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: January 5, 2024

*Leah VaSahnja Durant, Law Offices of Leah V. Durant, PLLC, Washington, DC, for  
Petitioner.*

*Benjamin Patrick Warder, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for  
Respondent.*

**DECISION AWARDING DAMAGES**<sup>1</sup>

On January 7, 2021, Michelle Burkemper filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*<sup>2</sup> (the “Vaccine Act”). Petitioner alleges that she suffered a Table injury – Shoulder Injury Related to Vaccine Administration (SIRVA) – as a result of her influneza (“flu”) vaccination on November 26, 2019. Petition at 1. The case was assigned to the Special Processing Unit of the Office of Special Masters.

On October 18, 2022, a ruling on entitlement was issued, finding Petitioner entitled to compensation for SIRVA. On January 5, 2024, Respondent filed a proffer on award of compensation (“Proffer”) indicating Petitioner should be awarded \$145,000.00 in

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<sup>1</sup> Because this Decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action taken in this case, it must be made publicly accessible and will be posted on the United States Court of Federal Claims’ website, and/or at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/uscourts/national/cofc>, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2018) (Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services). **This means the Decision will be available to anyone with access to the internet.** In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will redact such material from public access.

<sup>2</sup> National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2018).

damages for pain and suffering, and \$15,971.71 for past unreimbursable expenses. Proffer at 1-2. In the Proffer, Respondent represented that Petitioner agrees with the proffered award. *Id.* Based on the record as a whole, I find that Petitioner is entitled to an award as stated in the Proffer.

Pursuant to the terms stated in the attached Proffer, **I award Petitioner a lump sum payment of \$160,971.71 (representing \$145,000.00 in damages for pain and suffering, and \$15,971.71 for past unreimbursable expenses) in the form of a check payable to Petitioner.** This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under Section 15(a).

The Clerk of Court is directed to enter judgment in accordance with this decision.<sup>3</sup>

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

**s/Brian H. Corcoran**  
Brian H. Corcoran  
Chief Special Master

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<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment can be expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

On January 7, 2021, Michelle Burkemper (“petitioner”) filed a petition for compensation under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (“Vaccine Act”), alleging that she suffered a Shoulder Injury Related to Vaccine Administration (“SIRVA”), as defined in the Vaccine Injury Table, following administration of an influenza vaccine that she received on November 26, 2019. ECF No. 1 at 1. On October 14, 2022, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (“respondent”) filed a Rule 4(c) report indicating that this case was appropriate for compensation under the terms of the Vaccine Act for a SIRVA Table Injury. ECF No. 24. On October 18, 2022, the Chief Special Master issued a Ruling on Entitlement finding that petitioner was entitled to compensation. ECF No. 26.

### A. Pain and Suffering

Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded \$145,000.00 in pain and suffering.

*See* 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a)(4). Petitioner agrees.

B. Past Unreimbursable Expenses

Evidence supplied by petitioner documents that she incurred past unreimbursable expenses pertaining to her vaccine-related injury. Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded past unreimbursable expenses in the amount of \$15,971.71. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a)(1)(B). Petitioner agrees.

These amounts represent all elements of compensation to which petitioner is entitled under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a). Petitioner agrees.

II. Form of the Award

Petitioner is a competent adult. Evidence of guardianship is not required in this case. Respondent recommends that the compensation provided to petitioner should be made through a lump sum payment as described below and requests that the Chief Special Master's decision and the Court's judgment award the following:<sup>1</sup> a lump sum payment of \$160,971.71, in the form of a check payable to petitioner.

III. Summary of Recommended Payment Following Judgment

Lump sum payable to petitioner, Michelle Burkemper: **\$160,971.71**

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN M. BOYNTON  
Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General

C. SALVATORE D'ALESSIO  
Director  
Torts Branch, Civil Division

HEATHER L. PEARLMAN  
Deputy Director  
Torts Branch, Civil Division

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<sup>1</sup> Should petitioner die prior to entry of judgment, the parties reserve the right to move the Court for appropriate relief. In particular, respondent would oppose any award for future lost earnings and future pain and suffering.

TRACI R. PATTON  
Assistant Director  
Torts Branch, Civil Division

/s/ Benjamin P. Warder  
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DATE: January 5, 2024